

**Session No.25, organized by the East Asia Foundation**

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**“After the Seoul Nuclear Summit: Is Nuclear Weapons-free Zone in Northeast Asia Still Possible?”**

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**Participants:**

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1. **The priority list from the 2010 Global Nuclear Security Summit was: Information security (U.K.); HEU guidelines (France); Transportation security (Japan); Illicit trafficking (Jordan); Nuclear forensics (the Netherlands); Security culture (Russia); Radioactive source security (Germany); Treaty ratification (Indonesia); International coordination (Pakistan). The Seoul Nuclear Security Summit added the global nuclear security architecture and the role of the IAEA to the pre-existing nine topics adopted at the 2010 summit.<sup>1</sup> Can we all now relax and go home, or is there more to do before the Netherlands Nuclear Security Summit in 2014?**

**Halperin:** I do not follow this closely and do not have anything to add.

**Kawaguchi:** The basket agreed upon at Seoul is a good one. But, we need to do more work. We will have to strengthen the IAEA: its guidelines on security without restricting activities for peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and its resources to oversee the observance. Assistance to developing countries is needed. The international community should make efforts to agree to create a legal framework to enhance security, e.g. a protocol for security.

**Kim:** Seoul Nuclear Security Summit achieved a lot of progress in the field of prevention of nuclear terrorism and management of nuclear materials. However, the NSS still faces several challenges, including transparency on the quantitative aspect of the nuclear materials existing in the World, cut-off of the production of the nuclear materials, reduction of nuclear materials to a safely controllable level, universalisation of the international conventions for the prevention of nuclear terrorism and protection of nuclear facilities. International coordination remains to be a key element to address those challenges and therefore, Netherlands Nuclear Security Summit is expected to make a substantial progress in that regard.

**Fan:** Even though the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit ended without major breakthrough, we still can say many progresses have been made. First, the international consensus on nuclear security is further consolidated in this summit. Second, many countries are willing to take, and have taken actions at national level to strengthening the nuclear security in the past two years and for the future. Third, many countries are willing to

<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.thenuclearsecuritysummit.org/eng\\_media/press/press\\_view.jsp?oCmd=6&b\\_code=1&idx=304&rnum=1&f\\_gubun=0](http://www.thenuclearsecuritysummit.org/eng_media/press/press_view.jsp?oCmd=6&b_code=1&idx=304&rnum=1&f_gubun=0)

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cooperate with international partners to strengthen nuclear security and nuclear safety, and reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism.

Nuclear Security Summit is more of a setting for political consensus than a platform to reach substantial cooperation. Certainly there is more to do before the next summit in Netherlands in 2014. There are still many challenges ahead. Considering the huge fissile materials stockpiles and the increasing amount of nuclear materials with many developing countries developing nuclear power plants, it is believed that the protection of nuclear materials remains challenging, and the danger of nuclear theft and illicit trafficking poses a severe concern for many countries. It is still too early to be complacent.

2. **The Seoul Nuclear Security Summit was overshadowed by the launch of the DPRK's rocket that eventually fired and failed on April 12, 2012. The Summit did nothing to stop further testing of nuclear weapons or rockets by the DPRK. Moreover, the DPRK did not attend the Summit and dismissed it as a circus, and upstaged the Summit itself by meeting with the US in Beijing on February 29 and announcing it would allow inspectors into its enrichment plant and not test long range ballistic missiles. How important is the non-participation of states like Iran and North Korea from the nuclear security process?**

**Halperin:** Although it would be preferable to have all states participate in the nuclear security process, the value of the process does not depend on universality. Rather the concrete and important results come from the commitments of the participants and the reduction in the amount of unsecured fissionable material.

**Kawaguchi:** It was unfortunate that neither the DPRK nor Iran participated. The international community should continue its efforts to have their participation. However, with or without, our work must go on. Our cooperation forward to enhance security would be one element to affect the attitude of the DPRK and Iran, if not immediately.

**Kim:** The issue of proliferation of nuclear weapons is not supposed to be discussed in the NSS. Therefore, the non-participation of states like Iran and North Korea is not critically important to the success of the NSS process. However, it is desirable to encourage those two countries to comply with the agreements of the Joint Statement of the NSS to make the NSS process meaningful, considering that nuclear materials in those countries can be a target of non-state actors for the purpose of using them to perpetrate nuclear terrorism.

**Fan:** Certainly the regional nuclear proliferation concern is also an issue in nuclear security that should be addressed. However, is the Nuclear Security Summit the right platform or channel to address these proliferation concerns? Before any decision is made, we may need to think twice.

Nuclear Security Summit is a forum to gather support to strengthen nuclear security, if any controversial issue is to be addressed in this forum, it will be less likely for all participating countries to reach any consensus over nuclear security. North Korea and Iran nuclear issues are addressed in other platform, it is better to keep these issues separate from

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nuclear security summit. In my view, the non-participation of states like Iran and North Korea from the summit is a plus rather than a minus. If in the future, states like Iran and North Korea want to get involved in this process to tackle the nuclear terrorism of common interest, they should be welcomed.

3. At 27 years, Kim Jong Un is the world's youngest-ever nuclear commander-in-chief. On April 20, ROK officials noted their cruise missile can strike Kim Jong Un's office window (English ROK media referred only to windows). Noting the threat, the KPA's "special operation action group" declared that it would reduce "the Lee Myung Bak group of traitors, the arch criminals, and the group of rat-like elements including conservative media" to ashes in 3-4 minutes. The ROK's rhetoric threatened an attack on the North Korean head-of-state. The DPRK response appeared to threaten the assassination of ROK leaders. Is this war of words simply psychological test of wills; or is it truly dangerous, showing that there is no common framework for managing nuclear threat and the risk of war and escalation to nuclear war in the Korean Peninsula?

**Halperin:** I think this is only a war of words. Both sides understand the enormous destruction that would result from the use of force on the peninsula. The DPRK leadership also knows that it would not survive such a conflict. There is a danger of inadvertent war.

**Kawaguchi:** All countries should observe international law. We have created the UN and other international and regional security framework including the ARF and six party talks for confidence building and for taking measures. The DPRK is party to both. We must utilize these fora to communicate and work out a solution, but at the same time, we must be aware that the DPRK uses attendance to these fora to satisfy their needs.

Rhetoric could be dangerous but unavoidable especially in this case. However, parties should exercise maximum restraint. "Pressure and Dialogue" is the operating mode and we should make the DPRK rulers understand that their action for denuclearization is what we value and not words without action.

**Kim:** In fact, there has been existed a common framework for managing nuclear threat and escalation to nuclear war in the Korean Peninsula. The Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula between the ROK and DPRK signed January 20, 1992 had been playing as a common framework in the Peninsula. It clearly states that South and North Korea shall not test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons. However, DPRK violated the Declaration by developing nuclear programme.

On the other hand, it is not unusual for the North to make series of hostile rhetorics toward the South, including even the Presidents of the South. However, it is another matter that the North will put its rhetoric into reality.

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The ROK vividly recalls the blatant provocations of the North last year such as Chunan vessel incident and YP bombing. After the provocation on YP by the North, President Lee clearly warned the North that ROK was ready to respond to any other provocation of the North in a way that the North cannot possibly endure. Therefore, leadership of the North is supposed to be well aware of the consequences of its provocations toward the South.

**Fan:** History shows war of words never contributes to the security and stability of the Korean Peninsula. This kind of war of words is more of psychological test of wills than anything else. War of words indicates that neither side is happy with the current state. War of words only increases the anger from both sides and makes the negotiation process torturous.

I do not think this war of words will lead to war or escalate to nuclear war in the Korean Peninsula. To fight a conventional war, not to mention a nuclear war, is in no country's interest including North Korea. 2012 is a year of election and leadership transition, for the United States, South Korea, and North Korea as well. To maintain status quo is not ideal, but it is the least worst. After The sinking of the Cheonan and shelling of Yeonpyeong Island, the situation in Korean Peninsula becomes very fragile, and all countries concerned should keep this in mind.

4. **With the leadership transitions and elections in every country party to the Korean conflict, 2012 is likely to be the “year of doing nothing” in regional security affairs in North East Asia. Do we really have to wait until a window of opportunity opens in 2013, or are there steps that can be taken now to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons?**

**Halperin:** It will be difficult to reach a concrete international agreements during 2012, but we should use this period to develop a consensus among the three (US, ROK, and Japan) about how to resume negotiations when the time comes.

**Kawaguchi:** Efforts should be made continuously. Concerted efforts for “dialogue and pressure” are the road to solution.

**Kim:** There will be leadership changes in China, the US and ROK. It would not be easy for those states to make new initiatives for the maintenance of peace and security on the Korean Peninsula under the circumstances of leadership changes. And it would be possible for the North to take advantage of those political events to its own benefit. It means that the North could ponder to make a limited military action toward the South to drive wedge between the US and ROK or among those three countries and to consolidate the power basis of the young leader of the North.

In recognition of this possibility, China is cautioning against the North not to do conduct nuclear weapon test or any other provocation against the South. Furthermore, the leaders of three states, ROK, China and Japan gathered in Beijing in the middle of May and sent a clear message to the North not to conduct nuclear weapon test.

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**Fan:** Unfortunately, 2012 is very likely to be the year of doing nothing. The leadership transition and elections in all countries concerned steal the political capital and energy necessary for the negotiation of North Korea nuclear issue. Especially for the United States, President Obama did not invest much in North Korea nuclear issue in the past three years, and in my view the Leap Day Deal is his last try. However, after the failed launch of North Korea satellite, the Leap Day Deal is over. It is less likely President Obama will devote much energy to an uncertain issue with no tangible achievement to be expected.

However, that is not to say we have to wait and see in a passive way. If nothing is to be done by any country, it is likely something will occur. Therefore, it is very important for all countries to keep the communication channel open among themselves, and with North Korea.

5. **Does US policy to contain Chinese and North Korean nuclear threat with countervailing nuclear threat stabilize the region? Or undermine both nuclear nonproliferation and nuclear abolition goals?**

**Halperin:** I think that it stabilizes the situation for the moment. At the same time the USG should make it clear that it is ready to support a NWFZ and remove the nuclear threat against the states within the zone. Against China the USG should move towards an acceptable of mutual deterrence and stability.

**Kawaguchi:** At present, the greatest stabilizer in the region is the existence of US nuclear extended deterrence. People perceive that it is working and this perception also contributes to deterrence.

One comment I have on the question is that I wouldn't put China and the DPRK in the same basket. There is a distinct difference between the two. These two countries should be dealt with differently. China, as a recognized nuclear weapon country, should be part of the international efforts for the reduction of nuclear weapons. I would like to see more positive China in the ratification of the CTBT and the initiation of the FMCT negotiations. The DPRK is ignoring international law and should be dealt with accordingly.

**Kim:** DPRK contends that the American nuclear threat and aggressive policy toward the North are the main concerns of its national security. It is further saying that American nuclear umbrella on South Korea should be abolished. Facing this argument, the US administration has confirmed its intention not to attack or invade North Korea.

Geneva Agreed Framework, signed between the US and the DPRK in 1994, envisaged the full normalization of political and economic relations between the two parties. The Framework also wrote that the US will provide formal assurances to the DPRK not to use nuclear weapons.

Therefore, the assumption of the question that the US contains Chinese and North Korean nuclear threat with countervailing nuclear threat is contrary to the reality. As far as the North

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threatens the South or the US by nuclear weapons, the US needs to countervail it with nuclear umbrella protecting the South. And this policy will contribute to the stability on the Korean Peninsula.

**Fan:** I did not see any China nuclear threat. China's nuclear policy largely remains unchanged ever since it exploded the first nuclear device forty eight years ago. China made commitment in no first use of nuclear weapons, and China maintains a very small nuclear arsenal. China never indicates it will launch nuclear attack against any country. China's nuclear force is purely for defensive purpose.

Abolishing nuclear weapon is easier said than done. President Obama made a call three years ago in Prague for a world free of nuclear weapons, and the United States made some efforts toward this goal, but it is far from enough. US and Russia, the two nuclear superpowers, still keep more than 90% nuclear weapons of the world. They should further reduce the numbers, and further reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security strategy and military strategy. US policy to contain so called Chinese nuclear threat will be very counterproductive.

**6. Is allied dependence on US nuclear forces the most important obstacle to implementing nuclear abolition, globally, and in East Asia?**

**Halperin:** No. As long as it is limited to deterring nuclear threats I do not believe it is an obstacle.

**Kawaguchi:** The answer is clearly no. Important factors are existence of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the region and failure of the international regime to effectively eliminate/reduce/verify them. Of course, underlying factor is the lack of mutual confidence.

**Kim:** The most difficult obstacle to implementing nuclear abolition lies in the misperception on the utility of the nuclear weapons. States who want to develop nuclear weapons are usually motivated to enhance their national pride. The leaders of those states want to demonstrate their prestige in the national, regional or global level. North Korean leaders often argue that they develop nuclear weapons to protect the North from the threat of the US. However, we cannot understand its blame if we consider the declared vision of the President Obama for the world without nuclear weapons.

Many believe that DPRK is developing nuclear weapons to consolidate domestic political power, demonstrate its national prestige and enjoy its pride in the international community. Therefore, the misperception of DPRK and others on the utility of the nuclear weapons is the main obstacle in abolishing the nuclear weapons.

**Fan:** The nuclear umbrella extended to its allies by the United States has its historical origin, and it helped to maintain the stability in this region in the past. However, the Cold War has

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been over for more than two decades in Europe, and the nuclear war between major nuclear powers is getting very remote and unthinkable.

In order to implement the nuclear abolition, the United States should reduce the role of nuclear weapons to sole purpose. That must include a policy change in US extended nuclear deterrence. Nowadays, US extended nuclear deterrence is more of political gesture rather than of military significance. For the purpose of deterrence, conventional deterrence should suffice considering the balance of power in this region.

7. **How will the US “pivot” policy affect conventional and nuclear extended deterrence in East Asia? Is it coupled with containment and engagement or “congagement” of China? Or will it appear as a policy of encirclement and predatory power projection by the US and its allies, aimed at Beijing?**

**Halperin:** I think the US needs to move very careful in its “pivot” policy and make it clear that it is not an attempt to encircle China or to confront it. It should be accompanied by a clear willingness to accept strategic stability with the PRC and efforts to cooperate on security matters including on the Korean peninsula.

**Kawaguchi:** I do not expect that the US policy shift will have immediate implications on the conventional and nuclear extended deterrence. In the long run, how the U.S.-China bilateral power relationship will evolve and how the DPRK’s posture will change will affect conventional and nuclear extended deterrence.

**Kim:** Considering the character of the world globalized fast and deeply, in particular interconnectedness between the US and China, containment of China by the US is not conceivable. ROK is not positioned to be a part of the containment efforts, if any, by the US on China. Very recently ROK is entering negotiations with China and Japan for FTA.

The US is not capable to execute containment policy under the circumstances of declining economy.

**Fan:** US pivot policy is of three aspects: political, economic, and military ones. The military aspect of US pivot policy is somewhat worrisome. It has adjusted, and is adjusting its traditional military alliances, including military alliances with Japan, South Korea. It is strengthening military relations with Philippine, and Australia. It is boosting up its new types of military relations with Singapore, and possibly with Vietnam in the future.

B. What kind of implications will US pivot policy have on China's security environment? Chinese scholars are debating on it, and I am sure our government officials are assessing this situation as well.

C. In my view, it is very likely that with US pivot policy US and China are going to develop a competitive relation. Competitive relationship does not mean US and China will confront each other in Asia-Pacific region, but we need to manage bilateral relations to avoid the possibility of competitive relations developing into confrontational relations.

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8. The Asia Pacific Leadership Network's inaugural statement<sup>2</sup> issued in Seoul on December 12, 2011 called for political leaders to start "encouraging the formation of new nuclear weapon free zones particularly in areas subject to tension, including North East Asia and the Middle East; and refining and developing the elements of a Nuclear Weapons Convention." Is there any sign of leadership to these ends in East Asia?

**Halperin:** I do not yet see it but one can hope that the next ROK government and the Japanese government will show leadership.

**Kawaguchi:** Discussions on a nuclear weapon free zone, or a nuclear weapons convention have not started in any visible way in this region. Circumstances prevailing in this region are not continual to even starting the discussions in any meaningful way. Security environment has been deteriorating at an accelerating speed. With it, mutual confidence has deteriorated.

**Kim:** The nuclear free zone in the North East Asia will be desirable for the peace and stability in the region. The Nuclear Weapons Convention also will contribute to the realization of the world without nuclear weapons. However, it would take long and tremendous effort of the leaders of the region and the international community to realize the NWFZ in NEA and Nuclear Weapons Convention.

The nuclear free zone in NEA cannot be possible without Chinese nuclear abolition. And Nuclear Weapons Convention cannot be agreed without the establishment of a solid and effective executive body to monitor and implement the Convention. The Convention also requires the mutual trust among nuclear states.

Even-though it is an objective not achievable soon, it is necessary and worthy to do efforts for the leaders of the region and the international community to raise voice for the NFZ in the NEA or NWC. It would take time to achieve the objective but the time will come if the collective wisdom and effort of the leaders are mobilized.

**Fan:** A simple answer is no. A Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone including Japan, ROC and DPRK, is desirable for the peace, stability and prosperity in this region, however, developments in this region in recent years are not very encouraging for this goal. There exist several setbacks in this regard. First and foremost, North Korea conducted two nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009 respectively, and according to latest reports, it is believed that North Korea is going to do the third test. Second, there is a subtle change in Japan's attitude toward nuclear issue. Nuclear option has been a taboo for Japanese political leaders for several decades, but we heard a lot of rhetoric of going nuclear in recent years. Third, most recently, we heard that many prominent South Korean politicians are calling for the reintroduction of US tactical nuclear weapons to South Korea, and some believe that South Korea should obtain their own nuclear capability to hedge the uncertain future.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://a-pln.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/APLNInaugMediaReleaseSeoul.pdf>



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9. Nuclear Abolition entails un-packaging nuclear missions from the Cold War that continue today irrespective of their military utility or idiocy in light of the new security circumstances of East Asia. Enumerating exactly which military missions are either no longer required or can be achieved better today with precision guided munitions or other means is an important clarification of the residual role of nuclear weapons in the US military's posture. Considerable sheathing of the US nuclear sword, the so-called "nuclear recession" has already occurred, although not everyone, even in governments, seems to be well informed on these changes in the last 20 years. What are the real logistical issues, the situational awareness issues, and the dual-capability issues that arise when nuclear weapons are truly unwrapped from conventional military forces in East Asia?

**Halperin:** I think there are already totally separate. There are no US nuclear weapons stationed in Asia nor any abroad US ships in the Asia area or any place else (except for nuclear ballistic missile). The US should go one step further and say that its response to a limited nuclear strike against its forces or an ally will be met without an over-whelming response but not necessarily with a nuclear response.

**Kawaguchi:** The issues raised here are very pertinent as we all know that nuclear arsenal from the cold war days has lost its relevance in many ways. Obviously, there are discussions going on regarding this subject by the US and other governments, as well as professional circles. The issues are very complicated with broad and interconnected implications. Serious and professional discussions might be desirable internationally by the professionals on the role of nuclear weapons including nuclear extended deterrence and how technological progress in weapon systems might and might not contribute to nuclear disarmament and ultimate abolition. Such discussions with knowledgeable people will help lay persons understand the subject as security policy needs to be supported by the public in democracy. We also need serious discussions on what would constitute a satisfactory alternative to nuclear extended deterrence.

**Fan:** First, I fully agree that nuclear is not very much relevant in military utility now, and it is ridiculous to maintain its mission considering the new security circumstances of East Asia. Secondly, a war involving nuclear weapons in East Asia is not only unthinkable, but also immoral. Nuclear weapons were used at the end of WWII, and ever since there exist some risks of nuclear war, but we all are lucky enough that did not happen for more than sixty years. A nuclear war between major powers is beyond my imagination, but the nuclear terrorism is somewhat real. Rather than devoting energy to prepare a nuclear war in East Asia, it is highly the time to shift our focus to address small scale conventional wars, and terrorist threats.

Finally if nuclear weapons are truly unwrapped from conventional military forces in East Asia, I do not think there are any logistical issues, situational awareness issues, etc.

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10. **Is the global recession the best friend of nuclear abolition? Will budget cuts drive the US to downsize its nuclear forces to a smaller triad, to a dyad, or to a monadic nuclear force?**

**Halperin:** I do not think that the budget cuts will determine the size or shape of the US nuclear arsenal. These costs are very small in comparison to the overall defense budget.

**Kawaguchi:** It is true that fiscal constraints have been forcing governments to relook at their budget structure, particularly in democracy. Public pressure to reduce military expenditure and allocate budget to a better social security system has been at work. While the fiscal constraints are a contributing factor for nuclear disarmament and ultimate abolition, ultimately, security policy is a function of many variables, including governance of each country.

**Kim:** It is hopeful that the global recession could cause down-sizing of the nuclear weapons in the world. However, one-sided cuts of numbers of nuclear weapons cannot be expected because it would certainly change military balance among major powers.

But the economic element is important in promoting negotiations among nuclear powers to cut the numbers.

**Fan:** This is an interesting question. Global recession is not good for any country, but the positive side is that it will help countries concerned to think twice whether it is necessary to keep so many unusable nuclear weapons.

The budget cuts will have some impact on US nuclear policy. To what degree it will drive the US to downsize its nuclear forces is hard to say. We witnessed ups and downs in nuclear disarmament either unilateral ones or bilateral ones. Whatever it could be, if the next President has a vision for nuclear abolition, it is the time to downsize the nuclear arsenal. US just should not waste so much of taxpayers' money on these expensive toys any longer.

If the United States really wants to move toward a world free of nuclear weapons, the role of nuclear weapon should be reduced to its sole purpose, namely, nuclear is used to retaliate nuclear attack only. In this sense, monadic nuclear force is sufficient enough.

11. **Is China ready and able to engage the US in nuclear arms limitation talks, perhaps starting with extension of the INF Treaty to cover China, and then to strategic arms talks, once warheads on duty fall to a 1,000 in the US arsenal?**

**Halperin:** In my view, the chief obstacle to starting such talks is the failure of the US to state that its goal is strategic stability with China. The PRC would like the US to make a no first use commitment. I believe there are means short of that (or different) which can meet this need and permit talks to begin. They may be more likely within a P5 framework. In fact, the P5 have begun discussions of nuclear issues and this may turn into an important forum after one more round of reductions in deployed weapons by the US and Russia.

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**Kawaguchi:** I endorse wholeheartedly the initiation of discussions on the extension of the INF Treaty involving China.

**Kim:** China is not ready to participate in the talks with the US or Russia to reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons. Chinese official position on this stays at the equal numbers of nuclear weapons with the US and Russia. Therefore, the US and Russia should cut their numbers of the nuclear weapons to the level of those of China.

The world without nuclear weapons will be realized on the basis of equalization of the numbers of nuclear weapons among the major powers including the US, Russia, China and UK or France. It will be a long journey to the goal.

**Fan:** I think China will be ready to get involved in nuclear disarmament process with invitation from US and Russia, first as an observer, then as a fully fledged player. Why I say China will be ready to get involved? I would like to provide two examples. First, in early 1990s, China was very much encouraged by the trend of international arms control and disarmament process, and some Chinese scholars began to do research on verification. That indicates that China was preparing for nuclear disarmament. Second, China conducted only 40 something nuclear tests, but China actively participated in the negotiation of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty sacrificing the rights to improve its nuclear weapons.

Why I say China should first get involved as an observer? China was encouraged by the trend of international arms control and disarmament process in 1990s, however the development in late 1990s turned out to be an scenario out of Chinese expectation. There always are many flip-flops in arms control and disarmament.

When China realizes that the momentum of nuclear disarmament could be maintained and is irreversible; China definitely will join in this process. In nuclear, number is not the key issue for China. China maintained a small nuclear arsenal for so many years, and is in no hurry to build it up regardless the development in arms control and disarmament. In addition, China simply does not believe nuclear is usable, that is why China chooses not to build up its arsenal when China is technically, financially to do so. China learned an important lesson from US and Soviet Union nuclear arms race.

12. **Has Fukushima ripped the fig leaf away from the latent threat of nuclear weapons in Japan, such that an increasing non-nuclear powered Japan has less and less rationale to maintain a gigantic and highly visible stockpile of separated and unprocessed plutonium with nowhere to go but weapons if the breeder program and MOX recycling is dead in Japan? What should be done with this material?**

**Halperin:** I do not have a view on this question.

**Kawaguchi:** The government of Japan is currently reviewing its energy policy including nuclear energy. We may and may not continue with its present energy policy. Therefore, the question posed is a little premature.

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Voices to either reduce or eliminate nuclear power generation have gained momentum in the wake of the Fukushima accident. (According to the NHK Opinion Polls in March 2012, 43% answered “reduce”, and 28% “eliminate” nuclear power generation, i.e., 71% said either reduce or eliminate.)

If the policy decision is that we will terminate the FBR program and use of MOX, then, Japan needs to decide what it will do with the plutonium, and it will be a huge problem as Japan is a densely populated country with the NIMBY syndrome. At any rate, the materials have been placed under the IAEA inspection audit and no problem has been found.

In case the international community might entertain a concern that Japan might go nuclear someday, I do like to emphasize that Japan’s policy has been never to go nuclear and this has a strong endorsement of the public. Japan has no intention of destroying its fame that has been earned that it is a peace loving and law abiding nation. To withdraw from the NPT is out of the question.

**Kim:** The huge stockpile of nuclear materials of Japan is a source of concern of both Japan and the international community in terms that it can be used by Japan for making nuclear weapons or by terrorist groups to steal and make nuclear weapons for terrorism. It is also a concern of Japanese people for its safety.

It is desirable for Japan to down grade HEU to LEU or manufacture MOX using plutonium. If Japan does not move to that direction, the international community will be suspicious of the Japanese Government’s intention for the nuclear materials.

**Fan:** As I said early on, Japan's attitude toward nuclear issue is experiencing a subtle change. Nuclear option once was a taboo for Japanese politicians, but now we heard a lot of talks of going nuclear. Two years ago, when I visited Tokyo and interviewed many Japanese officials, and experts, I heard of lots of concern of North Korea nuclear threat, and some Japanese friends mentioned nuclear threat from China as well. Japan has accumulated many tons of plutonium, and that is interpreted by Japanese scholars and foreign observers as a hedging strategy. In addition, Japanese government had lobbied the United States to retain the nuclear Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles when NPR was drafted. This development is somewhat worrisome for Japan and for East Asia as well.

Japan is the only country suffered from nuclear weapons, and it has advocated nuclear disarmament for so many years. It is in the interest of Japan to keep playing the leading role in nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, rather than going nuclear. The bombs dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Fukushima incident only showed Japanese and the world how dangerous and disastrous nuclear could be. If Japan does not want to go nuclear, and if the breeder program and MOX recycling is dead in Japan, there is no rationale for Japan to keep the stockpile of separated and unprocessed plutonium. The plutonium should be removed from Japan to other countries.

Certainly Japan's security concern should be addressed, but nuclear is not the right answer.

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13. Is a regional fuel cycle collaboration possible and desirable that might bring the DPRK small Light Water Reactor and its enrichment activity into an internationalized fuel cycle involving China, Russia, the two Koreas, Japan, and the United States?

**Halperin:** This idea is very much worth exploring as part of a comprehensive package which includes a NWFZ and an international regime which treats both Koreas and Japan in the same way as it relates to nuclear issues.

**Kawaguchi:** Given the past track record of the DPRK, first, it needs to satisfy the concerns of others that the DPRK may not honor their international obligations.

International and regional collaboration on nuclear fuel supply has made some progress in the form of IAEA fuel bank as agreed in December 2010. The IAEA has also agreed to have discussions on the back-end of the fuel cycle, but my understanding is that not much progress has been made. As more countries need nuclear power generation, it is desirable to have international and regional collaboration on fuel cycle for non-proliferation purposes and for promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

This issue has to be approached carefully to gain the support of countries concerned.

**Kim:** The idea of internationalization of fuel cycle will become a basis for further discussions in the international community. It will contribute to the abolition of the nuclear programme of DPRK. ROK is positive in this idea and ready to contribute to the progress of this discussion. We support the establishment of international fuel bank to provide states with nuclear fuel without disruption. We believe that if the mechanism operates well, rationale of individual states to develop nuclear fuel cycle will be considerably weakened.

However, there are several barriers in realization of the idea. The subject of the bank, operational mechanism and so forth will be the central issues in this regard. The IAEA can play an important role in this process. However, it is another matter whether DPRK gives up nuclear programme upon internationalization of nuclear fuel cycle.

**Fan:** The answer is yes, but that can only be done after the denuclearization. At this moment, there is no way to convince North Korea to accept such an arrangement.

If denuclearization is realized, North Korea should not be deprived of the right to use nuclear energy peacefully. The Joint Statement in September 19 of 2005 clearly indicated that too. When time is ready for regional collaboration to meet the fuel need for North Korea's Light Water Reactor, it would not be difficult for these countries to cooperate over a regional fuel bank.

14. What comprehensive security frameworks exist that might stabilize and then reverse nuclear proliferation and armament trends in East Asia? Is there any reason to think that the US or any of its allies might promote such a framework in the future?

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**Halperin:** I believe we need a comprehensive framework which includes a six party security organization, a NWFZ, a peace treaty, and a commitment to non-hostility.

**Kawaguchi:** As for the framework, we have the ARF and the six party talks in this region, both of which include the DPRK. The first step is that the DPRK will honor its commitment they made over and over again to terminate their nuclear programs and take actions accordingly.

It is also desirable to strengthen the ARF, elevating it from confidence building stage to prevention of conflicts and dispute settlement. It has all the members having some interest in the region, US, Russia, China, Japan, etc. It would be better to utilize this forum instead of creating a new one.

**Kim:** The Six Party Talks mechanism can become an appropriate forum for comprehensive security framework in the Far-eastern Asian region if there is a progress in denuclearization of the North's nuclear programme.

The Six Party Talks may play a role similar to OSCE in Europe to stabilize the security of Europe in 1970s. Academicians are promoting the comprehensive security framework in the FA region but official discussions are not active yet.

The most powerful two countries, the US and China should converge their strategic interests in the region in order to forge a desirable climate for the discussions of comprehensive security framework.

**Fan:** Before working on a comprehensive security framework, it is extremely important for all six countries in this region to invest their precious political capital to end the cold war state in Northeast Asia. If the Korean War Armistice Agreement is not replaced by a peaceful regime, there will not be any hope at all for a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, not to mention a security framework.

The approach to address nuclear proliferation and armament trends in East Asia could be very different for US and for China. For China, it is important to address the root cause of nuclear proliferation and armament, a political reconciliation should go first, and then specific issue could be addressed. The United States just reverses the order.

In my view, an ideal roadmap for a peace and stable East Asia goes like this: first, end the cold war state in East Asia with a peaceful regime to replace the Korean War Armistice, then US and North Korea manage to develop sort of diplomatic relations, and then the denuclearization could be fulfilled.

For North Korea nuclear issue, regime transformation rather than regime change should be the right answer.

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15. **Is a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone conceivable in East Asia? How long might it take and can we afford to wait that length of time to bring such a zone into existence? How would the Taiwan issue be addressed in an East or Northeast Asian NWFZ?**

**Halperin:** I think that such a zone is conceivable and urgent. We should move as quickly as possible to secure agreement first among the three and then the five powers so that we are ready to present it to the DPRK when the time is ripe. I believe that the history of failed negotiations suggest that we need to first agree in detail on the final outcome document that all sides accept. Then the parties can discuss the steps to move toward the implementation of the agreement. These steps should involve movement by each side in a reciprocal manner. Each agreement should be in writing and should specify exactly what each side will do and in what time frame. Neither side should issue unilaterally interpretations of what it thinks the agreement means. When one specific agreement is implemented by both sides we should negotiate the next agreement.

**Kawaguchi:** It may be possible to have a NWFZ East Asia, but not in the near future. We will need favorable conditions to prevail both in the region and in the world. It would be wise not to deal with Taiwan issue in the discussion of NWFZ as most countries in the region do not support a two-China policy.

**Kim:** NWFZ in the East Asia region is desirable and should be promoted. But as far as China is not ready to join in the NWFZ, it is not conceivable. It would take long time to realize NWFZ in the region. Chinese nuclear weapons, North Korean nuclear programme, Japanese capability of becoming a nuclear state, Tawanese territorial issue and ROK's response to the DPRK's nuclear programme are inter-linked in the negotiations for NWFZ in the region.

The traditional rivalry and lack of military trust between China and Japan also will become a serious obstacle in the way to NWFZ. And DPRK's unstable domestic political situation also will become another formidable hurdle to overcome for the non-nuclear DPRK.

**Fan:** If we take all those challenges and setbacks I mentioned just now into consideration, a question needs to be raised: after two decades efforts by research communities for a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, are we closer or further toward that goal? The answer is not encouraging.

Though Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone seems not very realistic at this moment, it is worthwhile to purse it starting from now.

Taiwan issue is part of Cold War legacy, but it is not an issue to be addressed in the context of East or Northeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone.